# POETRY QUARTERLY

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# EDITORIAL

The first number of POETRY QUARTERLY from its present publishers appeared in the Spring of 1940. It was little more than a gesture of defiance in the carry-on-in-spite-of-all spirit when everybody else was closing down. At that time it seemed more than likely that it might be one of those not uncommon literary phenomena, the little magazine that appears once and dies. The last issue completed the five years of war through which our appearance has been regular and our policy unchanged. There are very few of the now established younger writers who have not appeared in our pages. It has been our aim to give them the chance of public recognition without which the writer is a meaningless and bitter example of repression in his own private world. The effect those terrible years has had on poets is discussed in a special article on another page.

Now that there is some communication with the Continent many people will be wondering what we shall find there, if anything has survived the terror and the famine, if the wild flower of poetry has been able in some odd corner to grow in spite of everything, as it has here, and will do. Our literary journalists have been busy running over to Paris, and what they have found has been extolled with somewhat surprisingly uncritical fervour. But its quality when studied dispassionately seems to us wretchedly poor, and if printed in these pages in English would be immediately cited as outstanding examples of that looseness of form, bad diction, woolliness, poverty of imagery and easy sentimentality of which they are so fond of accusing the new generation of English poets. Italy may have something to give us. It is too soon to know. There are signs that she is intellectually alive. It would be well to encourage the resumption of the traditional link between Italian and English men of letters which goes so far back in our literary history. Of Central Europe the only hope, as far as we can tell now, is in the work of one or two writers in this country, and in poetry, at least, the only figure of European stature is Fred Marnau. Through these lean years during which Europe has been a lowered curtain of iron to us, the only influence on our poetry has been that of America. And it has been much greater than many realize. Hart Crane, Robert Frost, John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Wallace Stevens are avowed influences on and mean much more to the young English poet than the older

generation of poets over here. In America poetry has been able to live and develop. Here it has been till these last years in process of degeneration into arid politico-critical quarrels, the preserve of cliques of head-hunting and corrupt reviewers. It is most probable that America will be our most fruitful source of inspiration for many years to come.

When this appears we shall be busy electing a new Government. It has always been maintained by us that politics, as Goethe so clearly pointed out, are the ruin of literature. We still agree with the younger critics, such as Derek Stanford and Ernst Sigler, who hold this view. Both our friends and enemies of the right and left have long wondered what our political views are. This is perhaps the moment to disclose them. Our first and only consideration has been poetry. We have printed both communists and probable reactionaries without thinking about who they were or what they thought, other than what seemed of value to us in their verse. In the purely political field we would hope for a revival of that liberalism which should now take the opportunity of representing the growing body of people who dislike monopoly and the dictatorship of either right or left, and who stand for the freedom of the minority and the individual in which category the artist and the poet are always to be found.

# HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL
## 1874-1929

### '*Manche freilich . . .*'

Some of course must die below forgotten,
Where the heavy oars of galleys wander,
Others live above them at the compass,
Know the flight of birds and the countries of the stars.

Some will always lie with heavy bodies
At the roots of labyrinthine life below,
While the chairs are placed for the others
Next to the sybils, the royal ladies,
Where they sit as if they belong there,
Graceful are their heads, light their gestures.

But a shadow always falls from those lives
Over into the lives of the others,
And the easy are to the heavy
As to air and earth ever moulded.

All the weariness of forgotten races
I can never banish from my eyelids,
Nor can I ward off from my soul that is frightened
Silent falling of the distant stars.

Many destinies alongside mine are floating,
And existence throws them into confusion,
Yet my share is greater than this living's
Narrow flame is or its slender lyre.

(Translated by ERNST SIGLER)

## WALFORD MORGAN

### *LXXIX*

I

as I walked there was only one
who sported with his shadow
on the beach, flashing crimsonly
from the waves as his hair burnt
golden in the sun
and him only I saw,
with two thunders folded in my fist
and a restless power in my palm,
a figure of silences, his spirit
surrounded with melancholy and
the manifold diamonds of the sea
indifferently I threw
a gust of birds upon him and
the pale eccentric gold of evening
descended, and the great wordless
treasures of the dark fluttered
within him
like winged finches of blue and
gold.

II

battering into cobwebs
upon his golden hair
two decades descended and
the darkness deepened,
and again I saw his clear vision,
the workers, and the furnaces burning
intoxicating the folded hollows
with an iron flame, in the green
valley that had become his home;
I heard the curlews cry
breaking into flower and a hooded fern
and his spirit roar,
his sinews searing the erratic vision
from the crimson night, leaping
into flames;

but his life was changed,
his soul was chained,
he lived in a green lair;
I listened
and from his iron tongue
the steel flowed
and molten with a kiss
the yellow serpents writhed into
yellow ribbons and followed his eyes
into fear;
I passed and was gone
for he was another;
but upon the two the flames played
and my fantasies formed upon their crimson
hair.

## *LVIII*

I wonder sometimes what they enshrined
in their dreams, those centuries,
those storms with their monuments
against the Egyptian wind.
Was it to lust or death
they listened in the engulfed sarcophagus
under the mask of the two-headed leopard
and the wolf, the powers of the legend?
Why did they allow the sun-blown sand
to bleed into their lips like a rose,
their immortality embalmed under a plastic hand?
Was it a dawning civilization?
The human mind stroked a silver trumpet;
through the sacred wood the dynastic
monument covered its coagulated sound in sand.
But a tree dwarfed their lives
Appointed other Pharaohs; sifted
shining grains from the falling palms;
constructed further ramparts.

The naked slaves in their lives
walked in the bazaars among the masks and
the cruel breasts of women;
their purple songs scorned the quiet anger of the prophets;

the lash and the leathern thongs
turned the axle-wheels of chariots,
the women awaiting the sign
from the burning mountain.

The tombs were unbroken, the Teraphim unwinged,
not a beard silent
during the dynasty of the Pharaohs
to the cries of warning in the wind;
. . . but their attitude unavailing;
though scarabs adorned the architraves of warning
under the silent Pharaohs and the tyrants'
shouting, only the Ibis
the purple Ibis watched over them
as the thunder wandered ominously upon the mountain.

## *LXXXV*

Documents written in sand
make patient inroads into history

assert a contending superstition
of coins;

the fingers of prophets investigate
ceremonial,
find meanings surprised from a
treasure-house of dreams,

usurp the centuries;
become
a serpent's tooth in a catafalque,
a phœnix of chalcedony;

and a ray broken from sunlight
falls from a parapet of dreams

but

I know history is forgotten, the sea
dies; and the traveller is drowned

in a sea of flames; and for me always
the fluttering bird over the empty tomb
hovers over

all centuries.

## EITHNE WILKINS

### *Shark's Fin*

But what dark flag
has thrown a shadow out ahead,
fluttering on chalky ribs?

However far we go,
with our brown eyelids wrinkled
from much looking out, with salty skin and bleaching hair
stiff in the wind, that later dries
above a tideline;

whatever exiles and high seas we call our own,
still we can not shake off the whitening wake astern,
the down-pull that would sift us gently, bone from bone;

and how
the lean shadow of another order continually follows,
the unseen jaws, the solitary pursuer.

## *I. The Eye as the Desert*

It is not you that move, but the running sand,
and beyond, those fluid mountains, loaded range of light
up-steepling through the skull.

It is your shadow floating through the bones
taken to be a journey,
or ahead the precipice.
This the tall shadow dancing where the journey seemed to be
and paints the lips still ghostlier,
brilliant thirst,
the shadow pouring away
in mountains of light, cliffs, staggering waterfalls.

Light curls on your lip
and is the desert in the golden eye.
The shadow, tangled in the imagined journey,
clutched at flashes of the thorn,
while light with its blaze of drums unfolding like a flower
beats round the skull,
its trumpets growing longer as the note prolongs the mountains ou
of reach.

The fingers slip in air, clash with the thornbush and the sand.
The outstretched arms are locked in shadow.

Yet
light splashes .
even from the thin plant flowering at your feet, the crying flower
with thorns, whose shadow glides
out of the desert and blots out the sight of hills,
darkens your thirst.

## *II. The Eye as the Coast*

Therefore climb down into this eye
with all its seas,
edge of the sea, grating of pebbles and sharp coast.

This is your beginning, stiff sea-holly,
thistles,
here with your thought hard underfoot and hard in your eye.
This is beginning:
in the small round eye, the staring rock-pool.

Light's centre heaps inside the twisting wave,
the breaking moment is alone, running to light.
Here darkness has solid arms, pulling and pulling down your head,
a stone
with fluttering lashes,
down here among rocks, on a loose wild beach
beside an approaching tide that speaks with your own voice

Look, among rocks
now wakes the hollow eye, a creeping fire.
And like twilight there arises the person itself,
and you feel this skull
a fragile
burden, a terror
among dreams.
Then the sea-winds ebb from your forehead,
and the clotted hair
streaks the shadowy face like blood:
the body standing with the skin unbroken,
blood with its unburst dams, and bones like towers about to fall.

You are your own terror in the dream,
a standstill.
Look! the luminous tall one.

## *III. The Third Eye*

What hands are these upon your thorny shoulders?
what rocks? what knives?

In an empty shell
the roaring of lost mountains roams at large
among the rocks, the desert, and the waves.

## WREY GARDINER

### *The Cliff*

Do not take your pen for you write with an old stick on the sand
Below the tide mark on the virgin shore
Of an unnamed beach and your
Flat picture of untruth will last only
The time between the tides, the time before
The fumbling inrush of the foam will curl about your dream
Written in sand among the broken shells.

And all the men in uniform, the naked girls, the bright unseeing children
Must move back before the ninth wave that narrows
The last strip under the dark cliff whose time
Is a century of centuries, where the sea
Hollows a cave, waiting
For nothing but the diurnal turning of the tide,
Leaving the beach clean and empty and alone again.

And in the end nothing will be remembered, not even
The smile of the girl as she comes out of the cave
Hand in hand with a man, satisfied with love,
Listening to the rhythmic wing beat of the mating gulls,
White in the sun high up on the cliff, screaming;
Not even the cold invisible smile of the moon
Who alone can change the hour of the tide, whose changes are always the same.

## DAVID WRIGHT

### *The Bay*

*Quelle est cette île triste et noire?—C'est Cythère,*
*Nous dit-on, un pays fameux dans les chansons,*
*Eldorado banal de tous les vieux garçons,*
*Regardez, apres tout, c'est une pauvre terre.*

Be on the narrow square of bay and sea,
And look, a boat rocks at the wood jetty,
Into his usual cave the tide tumbles,
Lifting the seaweed and with food for shells.
Call this a Dog-day, here a Sargasso,
Here where we are, and what we do now.

The dunes crumble here into the bay;
The gurnard goes with his reflecting eye
About his element, and four petrels
Cross their eight wings of love. The yellow dales
Possess their dwellers, a cottage, and sheep,
A bird sings music to a certain shape.

Another climbs and stares above the bay.
I fasten thought to the spiralling feather
Till I drag down that plumage to the sea.
The tides are at my foot. The land I create,
Think the fortunate archipelago
Where the gull faltered, an El Dorado.

Our love inhabits that imagined place.
Water was always where the island was.
The seaman notes with his pelagic eye,
*There drowned the sailor.*
His derelict spar
Washed on this spur, and his spiralling hands
Followed their falling body like petals.

## THOMAS GOOD

### *Vale!*

I have closed the door
On sighs clean as waves
Unmanned by heroes, the swift
Anguish of mazurkas, a farewell
To appease evening, and the crystal.

All cools a little now
Fury is swallowed in an antique sky,
To oblige monsters in a travesty of tears
Dissolving wonder and a pledge approved
By hearts in swift reluctant snow.

Out of peace the fiddler
Attunes a whip, awakes the wasp
In fear; warmed by a zone of eyes
Incites a star favouring storms
To cripple reason or seduce the calendar.

I recoil from Daphne
A laurel in the bus to stir
New summer anthems of desire;
By night or light allure
Faces of mountains
Or induce the choric fire.

Alarmed between waltzes
Incessant man condones the lie
A surrogate for darkness,
Recalling Jezebel among small-talk
Allows the small bow to blind.

Truth befriended by battlements
Is impotent in misery to retrieve
The vanished interlacing steps,
Exacts a scaffold to redeem
The idiot debt which death
And our eclectic boundaries bequeathe.

## *To a Lady in Paris*

Who walks by invincible water
No tear occurs to assuage
His grief by proxy,
Encouraging night to engage
Hushed wave-lengths of fear
A low voice defying oceans.

New lamps shyly gather light
Arrest the moth, and tease
Complexions into freckles;
A girl in restaurants forgets
Flowers in hunger, and the nea
Crematorium of desire.

He warms in exile to confront a nation
Armed against loss, unready for the bee
In pillaged fields, where bronzed hands
Enclosing hope, implore new ships
In spring, and the gayer horizon.

Man carries life again
Between corpses in stealth
As the child in ransom grows,
So small a leaf in panic
To resist death, imprudent
Like a fish from the sea
To attain and return.

To touch again meaning, assign the event
Reticent beneath the mask of cities,
Ignoring the rich abject in arcades
And the tipster's table, the pitiable
Reign of memory in want, and after
To gild the thought, a statue of flame,
Above the wound and the storm.

## KENNETH GEE

### *Poem for a Journey*

Over what waters, my son, towards far shores
Where greeting is flower or thorn, is sunlight?
The quayside handkerchiefs are sad as snowfall:
Now fades the singing in the bars.

There is only the faraway farewell:
Grey hands are falling under bitter rain,
Voices call with the hollowsounding sirens.
Lost now the homelights and friendly hill.

Over what waters, o my brother?
Following the witless gull
That is free as you are not free
To ease the rigours of its winter.

Pack, rifle, boot and belt—
Young bodies bear a load of old evil.
Darkness comes upon their singing
And stills it: the crowd of shadows sleeps.

*Those who were with me on that voyage,*
*What roots now twist about their bones?*
*The lilywhite boy from the narrow city*
*In orange grove has laid him down.*

*Captain Jack was bold as brass*
*And lies in crowpecked barren country*
*Dreaming of sweet river Thames*
*Brave gentleman that worms now worry.*

By knees of mountains, by swaying moon;
A bitter salty grave has stolen
The voyage from one unlucky man
And brought their earliest, passing sorrow.

They came to strange anchor: a glass bay,
Burning rock, olives, the marvellous blue water:

Brother, this was the brightest air you ever met
And never fell upon your bleak home-winter.

Yet whatever the waves said there and the birds,
This was not the meetingplace you wanted:
Black rock, gold sand, were no man's friend:
Delicate leaf, bright berry, soon were withered.

Wherever they were, they were alone together,
Comrades whose wishes the same far home would wed.
Together their bodies were alone in darkness,
For so many fingers the touch of love was dead.

O men and women, separated by the waste of sea:
The bright constellations and branches hang over the lonely.
Cold wind plucks the lilac by the door:
Soldier, sailor, they come to knock no more.

*O Captain Jack was bold as brass*
*And Captain Jack was hard as nails*
*But war has blown him by the mast*
*And in a bare place he is laid*

*There is no water nor any green*
*But what it may be he can dream*
*The sun falls on his tomb and burns*
*Sand licks dry upon his bones*

*I had a letter in my pocket*
*I had a chance I'd win my way*
*Where the winds of home blew free—*
*O who was I to strike so lucky?*

Three steel helmets by the hill;
Bullets chattered from a bush:
Loose the blood and loose the footfall
Where leaves had budded in an ambush.

Now in dull earth one is laid,
Far from hometown stone and riversong.
Summer still smoulders in his bones:
A fine ash will be left at the last.

The lilac smokes like torches near his home,
The water flows like seawind by his home.
For him is now the end of fear:
Weary flesh lies quiet there.

Over dark waters and o singing
Bravely at first you were borne
As any bird on springtime morning:
Weary flesh, lie quiet as stone.

## KEITH DOUGLAS

### *A Storm*

Curtaining this country the whispering rain
Stipples in cold monochrome the sun's
Alive and tinted picture, so warm once;
The wind's voice laden like reeds with random pain.

Impending with their frown the bowed trees,
Clouds make a ceiling by the rooks' village
At which how vainly they complain, silly
Voices fall down, lost in the day's disease.

Like all, this storm will blunder along the hills,
Retire muttering into a smutty corner
Of sky, and there dying, his rant stills.

Wait. See like a tired giant the sun return
To step into your valley and gladly fill
Evening with moist colour, made untarnished.

## ROBIN ATTHILL

### *The Unflowering Urn*

A little space of years
between the wars,
unwatered, shadowed
by the granite tenements of fear.
Within these grey walls
they could only watch the clay
upon their generation's wheel, and the wheel
turning, turning, night and day.
Childhood and youth
were spared, the frail roots
that pushed among the cruel stones
their stunted buds towards the sun.
Into their stifled prison, dim
sounds dripped from the unseen world
and far above, the line of the grim
roof raced against the cloud;
and the wheel, turning, turning,
beneath a darkening sky.
Was it a cup to catch
the night-fallen showers
that sprinkled the soil? a bowl
where their few flowers
might linger out a day?
Night now, and they could only watch
till the storm broke and the terror
of lightning revealed that the turn
of the wheel was still, and life's centre
piece was the unflowering urn.

## JULIAN ORDE

### *The Awaiting Adventure*

Dear stranger, the mule is loaded, let us start.
A tune of trees is written across the hill,
And the sky is high, today, and nothing is still,
But I feel banners thudding against a wind,
A cave of wings rushing over the ground,
And the leaping day calling me into love.

The expert from the city tunes the trees
In far snowfields of sleep we may not cross;
The revolving lighthouse is adrift and lost—
But oh! I am awake and running down
The yellow slopes of my tomorrow's hopes!

There is about us more than a man's mind,
More than a ship's huge voyaging and end
Or the whole brass music of a gallant day.
The jet of life has sprung its ecstasy:
I am in love with greater than I am,
And share the way of stone and star and lamb,
And even the central, liquid rock moves in me.

Always, stranger, let us be setting out,
With home not left but in ourselves always.
The eager fabulist of holy orders
Will log our journey for us in the night,
And—if we let him—ride ahead and praise.

The hierarchy of mountains does not speak,
But the cold flowers, with a different life,
And in a different time, create and die,
Familiar with the deathless walls of ice;
Not seeing their fathers' shape against the sky.

Stranger, met at last, this great beginning
Shall swing us through all times and all planes;
Though we but walk, are little, and have names,
Our history is in us and we in history.

## W. S. GRAHAM

### *The Day and Night Craftsmen*

Anyhow here's highroad's man's unwitnessed town
Set where my making and collected surnames wrangle
To landmark the sudden garden past the latch.
Wellfared love-right and lettered, the founded sparks
Stoor of the brightsmith and my hammermen,
Strike up the praise that never wrings destruction
One ding of worth through the municipal vein.
Struck from the watershedding words, the tinker
Sets up the unbundled spires shamefacing ruin.

Here's flame as dark as falling and ascension
Native to barefoot accident and beast.
Here where I hope and happen on a cindered hill
Late round me stranger villages and journeymen
And time's bone setter, chart sleigh of beast and mile.
Here I broach telling reached to with today,
Speak out the unbroken filament and wholesome
Terrible meantime the upward towns appoint me.

Down the green guilds the children and the season
Press shape in mud and chivy language down
That I might mean my industry and task
Red through the hands that cup a gay trumpet.
What I make falls round you, a ring of rooftops
That tilt the landing birds in a loud market
Into what wordfall strikes from you the marvel.
Under your answer the tower is turned to cinder.
The contented flesh turns truant to a stone.

Here where the quick quays lie along the veins
Arriving others, madmen to my tongue
Cry crimson through the warehouse and the squares,
How black the dark is in the innocent day,
How white the space under the sea's window.
Always they drum the planks, patrol the furlong
Jet through the meadows as they say the season
Over and ever arriving, giving the rising
Seizure to summon the town, anyway fountain.

Now hermit that fox trotting the raftered alp
To stare on the shouting bone and bloody town
Lets down his jewelled jaw a comet bleed
Across the foolscap floors and fostered gangs.
Further through other gables the dead take heed
Laid out on frames along spring's fingertips.
The anyhow highroad's man's householding height
The catherine whirligig, the goodnight sky
Turns with its countrymen slowly about.

## ROBERT RICHMAN

### *Letter from these Dead*

Although October deaths
Will grow from April births,
As the man who goes to the maskroom
Takes off a mask, selects a mask,
I come from these dead to assume my own
Of the masks that will not fit;
Of the masks I should not wear.
But what of the interval
Between the putting on and taking off;
And what of the masks I will not find?

Although I did not want to see
The wheel of fire revolve through change
And burn, I have seen chaos come
Riding a crystal of snow to death
On the flat light of the afternoon.
Like the first wound or the last leaf
A sorrowed lover stands.
And as the man who wishes to alter
Courses of the sea with his finger
Will know, the sea is forever
Only the sea that washes rock.

And on some island will be the garden I
Lie in to look for fractured stars;
But here across my hands
The ant, the cricket, and the asp will crawl.

## LOUIS ADEANE

### *Leicester Square*

*Where the statue says: 'There is no darkness but ignorance'.*

Night's muffled hands upon the slated hill
Touch out the lights; the autumn animal
Spreads his return with salt along the streets
And moves with limbs of mist. Now all the tall
And beggared beasts tread to their terminal
Among scaffolded trees and twisted cold,
The dying wood at the heart of the world.

The blue-lit hearses with their load of dead
Groan up the tide astride a city's blood
And round the inviolate wood the wounded faces
Like time are futureless, a turning flood
Venous and thickening where featured gods
Quickened in cardboard, hoarding-height surround
The world of the hurt and the whirl of the drowned.

But on that ground the glimmering angel stands
Powdered with frost and murmuring to friends
And at her side the crying host, the lost
Sleep with themselves at last. All terror ends;
The gutter Christs who walk with working hands
Bless here the finally found, saved, sound; they wait,
Ringed in a singing hurt at the round world's heart.

For these are everyone; while evening holds
Its circled gala on the frozen fields,
Shackled like day within the dreaming flood
They wait until time's inward morning folds
All in a sickled wave and the world yields
Into the sun and the self of everyone,
And the singing heart wakes in a gold wood.

## PAUL POTTS

### *Jean*

There is a wild flower growing
Inside a broken vase,
On a mantle in my memory.

This flower will die
When you are dead,
And while you live will grow.

Because each petal and its stem
Is like long years, of waiting and of hope,
So useless and so void.

## ELIZABETH BERRIDGE

### *Late Summer Afternoon*

This could be any place
Where people are happy.
Upright, looking over the valley
And if hills were mountains;
Bavarian landscape.
But no bells, no peasant-painted exquisite
Churches.
Only the sunwarmed wind the same everywhere.

This could be any place
Where people were once happy.
Lying, the gilt-green leaves blowing
And the deep bright sky between;
Italian seascape.
But no brimmed bay, no whitewalled
Houses.
Only the unfelt wind a genie in the treetops.

This could be any place
Where people are happy.
So long as grass grows
And sun is warm on flesh
And the wind blows.

## STEPHEN COATES

### *Poem*

The fact of your existence is a salient feature
And important aspect of the present territory;
For whatever rivers flow by these arid deserts
This oasis is cool and welcome and open-branched.

But this pool beneath the palm-trees (no sign of victory)
Is not quiet or still, does not display lazy reflections.
The flowers which grow and grass beside the water
Or leaves in the air are still and do not waver.

There is no wind in the desert and the sand there rests;
Nor do the trees nod to the breeze. Beneficent sunlight
Scatters its pearls among us and makes the damp soil
Warm around the roots and under our bare feet.

But in this peace the pool is not so quiet
For, spontaneously and out of its own strange nature,
Waves appear on its surface, contradicting the weather,
And small waves wrap themselves into its dark waters.

Bubbles arise from unseen and unsuspected sources
Or the high level drops exposing a putrescent mud,
And in the calm evening when the sky is bright
Black images reflect great monsters struggling for mastery.

This is knowledge not mentioned in the guide books
Also the shops are careful to sell only discreet maps;
But we have seen and know this not unusual horror
And can only accept its most unwelcome implications.

## PERSONAL BIAS

A few weeks ago I watched a performance by the ABCA Players, a theatre unit made up of professional actors and organized by the War Office with the purpose of 'clarifying' political and military issues for the troops. The play dealt with the Government's Release Scheme, and was entitled, if I remember correctly, 'Where do we go from here?' The ideas it contained, the pills it sweetened, do not concern me here, but rather the way in which they were put over—unique in my experience of the theatre in that radio and film technique, verse of a kind and gags out of 'Comic Cuts' were used in the most extraordinarily effective manner. The audience was as bad as it could be: it consisted largely of men recently called up who had had to march to the theatre through some miles of pouring rain, had to sit in their drenched greatcoats, were not allowed to smoke, and wanted no part of any play, least of all a propaganda play that told them of years more in the Army and years more of 'direction' afterwards. Yet within a short time they were as responsive as any audience I have seen, they laughed at all the right moments, stopped coughing, applauded for a long time at the end of the performance.

If this is a fable of our times, you yourselves will have to supply its moral. Your point might be that this production was provided by the proverbially backward War Office and some people would do well to cut themselves a slice of it, or you might suggest that with the aid of so brilliant a method of presenting a policy most people could be persuaded to believe most things, or you, who call yourself a practical man, might remember that these men would be marching back through some more miles of pouring rain to dubbin their boots and blanco their webbing and then join a queue to gaze at Betty Grable, and that their language in discussing the Release Scheme would not have changed by one word.

At the beginning of the War poetry was very dead, as far as the public was concerned. Then a number of popular critics, staring hard at a fixed point, searched loudly for the Poets of This War, found A. P. Herbert and Alice Duer Miller and, insulting the dead, Alun Lewis and Sidney Keyes: culture and civilization were much-used words; the churches, the theatres, the concert halls, the art galleries, were almost as packed as the cinemas, and the bookshops, because paper was short and the supply of novels limited, often sold books of poetry.

You can finish the story yourselves, bearing in mind what happened during a previous war and the years after it, and if you are a poet you will perhaps reach the conclusion that you may just as well adjust yourself to the not-so-new idea that you will never again be more to the public than a slight acquaintance who talks too much in a high-pitched voice.

A war is bound to be a field-day for the Kitsch producers, and it is not surprising that some poets were more than willing to come to terms, and went out of their way to prove they were strictly social beings, even in their lonely moments of inspiration; and when they roof-spotted or sweated over assault courses or walked across the Square to the M.o.I., their suitably adjusted images trailed along behind them. And by their eagerness to please, by their joyful announcements that they would be good, they managed even to convince their conscience that all these nice Guineas could not possibly be wrong.

There is no intention to argue in these notes against the sincere political convictions of any poet. But before the critical standards which have been set by so many centuries of poetical achievement are lowered by the little boys who think that by beating their toy-drum and wearing a paper helmet they are forcing the gates of paradise for masses in their wake, for the million raucous throats yelling their trite melodies—before that happens it is as well to remember the position of the 'rare poet', as Nicholas Moore called him, who

> '. . . *achieves in a*
> *Moment the distinct shape of a poem, takes*
> *Word and word and puts them lip to*
> *Lip, creates love from them. . . .*'

It does not require me to describe here how the split between poet and public came to be widened during the last hundred years. But what does need to be stated again and again is, that it is fallacious to presume the split can ever be healed. The troops have not been singing party-lined couplets in this war, but Roll Me Over. And it is not 'If I should die think only this of me', or words to that effect, that emanated from them when they landed in Normandy, but the Beer Barrel Polka. Why not then think a little less about the Shelley who said that poets were the unacknowledged legislators, and more about the one who wrote that 'Music when soft voices die vibrates in the memory'? Why not accept the situation with some dignity—even if it is the dignity of the aristocratic fool of Aguecheek who

said, 'I was adored once too', and resigned himself to his pathetic loneliness?

We had much political meandering from admittedly minor figures during the war; they identified themselves with the professional town-criers, and with the childish overflow of their hearts wrote some astonishing nonsense. One of them, believing, no doubt, he was not only writing good poetry but the right kind at that, published this:

> '*Bare, bitter with the truth, not posed, not slick,*
> *Here's verse that's more than good, it's Bolshevik.*'

Probably no one—a Leading National called his style 'incisive'—told him that these lines were as stupid as the following sentence:

'*All argument over Heine is settled by reference to his Judaism*',

which I have taken from a 'History of German Literature' published in Germany in 1937. But this sort of writing provided no approach to the public, which received more than its full quota of political and patriotic uplift from official sources: whatever else it did not want, it wanted no further propaganda, not even in verse. That so much was printed at all—unofficially, I mean—was the fault of busy editorial fingers manufacturing by the dozen pies of loud adjectives and crackling exclamation marks.

They were one of the war-time nuisances—the poets who would not follow the advice of Peladan, to leave their patriotism on the barrack square. Another was the Anthology With A Reason. Poets discovered that, if they had kissed the Blarney stone, or climbed Snowdon, or reported the Loch Ness monster, or had once had tea in Scarborough, or were a refugee or in uniform, or had fought fires or never published anything before, that fact lent a special significance and importance to their verse which nobody else, or at least only the poets who had shared their unique experience, could claim. And the editors told them so. And invariably they also told the reader that in their anthology and no other, were there eyes beaming brightly towards a glorious poetic horizon, accept no substitute. We were told not just to read somebody's poem, but, with bated breath, the work of a miner with fourteen children, or a Scottish Communist or a Welsh Nationalist or a German anti-Fascist. Again, there is no intention to doubt the sincerity of the contributors (and sometimes the editors), but the result, in every case I can think of, was a handful of good poems almost submerged by a mass of rubbish by authors whose claim to be considered as

poets was based on their birth-certificate and little else. My second hope then is, that editors and publishers of poetry will stop vieing with circus proprietors and close up their freak shows.

Let me say again that these two, and especially the first, were only minor nuisances: they could do little harm to the impression left by all the good poetry printed for us during the war—in the flourishing little magazines which, thanks largely to the editors of two of them, devoted almost entirely to new poems, brought into the open many young talents; in the consistently good books published by three big houses, and one or two new firms—poetry intended to further no cause but that of poetry, subject to no party or country, no far-fetched theories or inconsequential Isms, written for no other reason than that the poet wanted to write it, and for no one but the appreciative: and it is a pleasure to record that many people in this country still are appreciative, or are at least prepared to admit that if they find something not to their liking, the fault may quite possibly be theirs.

And no one can properly blame the public if the ordinary pleasure in poetry displayed by its few is not always quickly adapted to the changes in the poet's pace, in his imagery and language. Looking back over six years, these changes may have taken a long time to come about: from the precise groping of the 'thirties for a Boy Scouts' heaven of All Pals Together, from the *conferences, adjournments, ultimatums* and the abstract capitals of *Sex, Art and Politics: those poor expedients* (to quote David Gascoyne), to a realization that superimposed official ideals were, to put it gently, not always identical with the poet's. At the beginning of the war Auden cried, hopeless, despairing: 'We must love one another or die'; and now, in retrospect, it seems as if the windmills' transfiguration into much grimmer adversaries, into human beings, had silenced the poets for a long time.

> '*O plunge your hands in the water*
> *Plunge them in up to the wrist:*
> *Stare, stare in the basin,*
> *And wonder what you've missed.*'

In 1943 Lawrence Durrell published his 'Private Country': an apt title for a book which served to many as a reminder of the necessity of the poet's remaining aloof. Durrell's beautiful landscape was that of the Grecian isles; for Nicholas Moore, who admires him greatly, the time, the place, the person were anytime, anywhere, anyone where he could be alone as a poet, as the recorder of a miraculous

glass tower in the middle of the forest. David Gascoyne, entreating his

> '*Christ of Revolution and of Poetry*
> *That man's long journey through the night*
> *May not have been in vain*',

and Alex Comfort, a Walt Whitman turned Lazarus:

> '*I have been blind, but I have seen everything*
> *I have died, I have been raised again*
> *out of the dead-cart, the corpse pit of Citizens*
> *not by Christ but by poetry*
> *and it is I who am speaking to you*
> *Follow me—*'

are poets at whom no one could level the old charge of obscurity: they spoke to every adult person who had the good sense to listen. And if the bright, busy couplet-weavers ranted on and on, at least the 'rare poets' found encouragement in the scholars, in that most valuable book of literary criticism for many years, Maurice Bowra's 'Heritage of Symbolism'. Surely, too, the hope for poetry emanating from these young men was one of the reasons why 'A World within a War', containing the best poetry Herbert Read has written, has become the moving, graceful symbol of all that his *schwer zu tragende Einsamkeit* has to offer the poet, in which

> '*All shall be well*
> *And all manner of thing shall be well . . .*'

In the 'Four Quartets', one of the greatest poems in the English language, Mr. Eliot has shown the enduring poetical and spiritual values which still remain to us, and has supplied us with a means of escaping from temporal to eternal standards.

ERNST SIGLER

# REVIEWS

## THE FASHIONABLE IDIOM

DIANA JAMES, *The Tune of Flutes* (Routledge, 5s.); ROY MCFADDEN, *Flowers for a Lady* (Routledge, 5s.); ALAN ROOK, *We Who are Fortunate* (Routledge, 5s.); R. N. CURREY, *This Other Planet* (Routledge, 5s.); LEONARD CLARK, *Rhandanim* (Salamander Press, 6s.).

There is a new idiom in poetry, fashionable and corrupt. The origins of literary trends invariably possess their own strange logic, similar to the weed, recently discovered among the ruins near St. Paul's, which has not been observed there since the fire of 1666; and we can speculate on the antipodean obsessions of an Auden in Birmingham and a Tambimuttu in Ceylon, or ruminate over the significance of that disturbing part, nership of Roughton and Gascoyne; but these things are rare, fascinating and unpredictable. Less rewarding, but equally necessary in the assessment of poetic values, are the effects of influences-such as Treece's 'golden lads' flirtations with Housman and Pudney, or the image of the almond, which is such a long time dying at the hands of several poets. Now, it appears, we have reached the blood-sex-and-iron age. We find girls in their teens lisping their numbers in the matronly accents of Miss Raine, and callow servicemen, with a volume of Dylan Thomas in their knapsacks, babbling of severed sexes, men shapes of boughs, women of leaves and flowers. The echoes are so obvious. It is all rather sad.

These generalizations can be applied fairly to each of the new Routledge poets and to the Salamander poet, for, although each has a gift of language exceeding talent, and at least two are undoubtedly good, they also show signs of the general decay of syntax and the misuse of imagery. Nevertheless, the publishers deserve our respect if only for bringing out the poems written by Diana James between the ages of fourteen and seventeen. I do not know whether Miss James has read her *couleur de rose* elder sisters, but the iron hand rests heavily in certain passages, producing weaknesses of diction which could be avoided. A notable example is the poem, 'The Munition Workers', with its 'fetter of the mill' and bullets that 'teem in this dark night, and wreathe their brows with iron'. Such

lapses, however, are rare. More apparent are the charming, Christina Rosetti-like effects of 'Capricco in Crimson: 1941' and 'Barn Dance'; the truthful ring of 'You turn all things in me'; the remarkable control of the sonnet, 'Behind this muslin veil the city lies'. Diana James has reached a high degree of accomplishment at an early age, and she will undoubtedly write valuable and significant poems as the processes of growth and experience extend her range and technique.

The iron has entered deep in the consciousness of Roy McFadden; an iron tempered by traditional Irish ore, as in his poem on Swift, in 'Elegy for a Mad Girl', and 'Letter to a Boy in Prison', with its manly sense of pity. Sometimes he is dangerously close to the idiotic pretentiousness of recent anthology pieces written in the contemporary idiom, but his ultimate sincerity enables him to avoid the banal. When a poet writes 'In the beginning was the bird', he is either lazy or a humbug, but when McFadden writes:

> '*The cool sky opens like a hand,*
> *Widening into a wound,*
> *A mouth of song*',

the shoddy images are held together by an almost indefinable, extremely personal sense of control. To put it simply: If a poet *sees* or *feels* an image or experience, his words will create a separate life of image and sensation, but if he is a self-conscious manipulator of literary devices, his words will appear flat on the all-too-impersonal paper. There is no easy Dada way to inspiration, nor yet is poetry a business of abstractions from Roget's 'Thesaurus' McFadden, though too fond of crucifixions, blood, wounds, worms and decay (the stock-in-trade of any undergraduate determined to appear in 'Horizon' after reading ''Tis Pity She's a Whore'), is capable, in his best poems, especially those with the thickest Irish accent, of original and memorable utterance.

Alan Rook, who at times appears over-anxious to draw attention to the fact that he has seen active service, loses much through stridency, an insistence on gore and the seamier details of war experience. Describing death as 'the old man who lives alone next door', he asserts:

> '*We know the colour of his socks and braces,*
> *can count his goings-out, his comings-in,*
> *in dishabille or dressed for going places.*'

Too hearty-hearty, too studied. Then there is the officers' mess

viewpoint, which the poetry reproduces in the tones of a grocer's boy with a Sitwell complex, resulting in lines like, 'O boy-o, the Padre's getting tight'. Nor is the quota of wombs, rotten fruit, sex and wounds omitted.

R. N. Currey uses almost the same language as Rook, but, although the publishers describe him merely as an objective reporter, he manages to fill his reportage with poetry. The subject matter of his poems is commonplace: telephone boxes, parades, firing ranges, and there is an unpalatable piece about Number Ones and G.P.O.'s entitled 'Check Dials and Line Up', and a spattering of military nomenclature gives his verse the ugly appearance of a sheaf of D.R.O.'s; yet the poetry is there (hampered by the inevitable iron-sex-blood images), and there is a dignified texture in the theme of exile, of 'absolute exile to the outer seas'.

Leonard Clark, a poet with several earlier works to his credit, indulges in an orgy of blood, iron and sex. Having invented an imaginary oriental deity, to 'invoke the soul of the world', he reverts to cosy homespun apocalypticisms like 'fluted and solitary cliffs . . . wombed in that matron lap . . . a rib of watching sand.' If I urged you to pay six shillings for this short poem, you would come after me with a gun.

CHARLES HAMBLETT

## THREE AMERICANS

CHARLES GLENN WALLIS, *No Mortal Blow* (Contemporary Poetry, Baltimore, Maryland); HARRY BROWN, *Poems* (Secker & Warburg, 5s.); EDMUND WILSON, *Note-books of Night* (Secker & Warburg, 7s. 6d.).

Charles Glenn Wallis, who was killed last year in a most unfortunate accident—he fell out of a window—was one of the most promising young literary men of America. His criticism was widely published in magazines as different as 'The Kenyon Review' and 'View,' and was everywhere recognized as brilliant. *No Mortal Blow* is a posthumous collection of his poems, most beautifully designed and produced; and excellent poems they are, though they did not achieve the immediate recognition of his criticism. The volume contains as well as his own poems some excellent translations from the French and the Greek, and his own work shows these influences, particularly the classical. But he's a

modern poet, and makes a modern and intriguing use of old forms—there are many villanelles in his book; I quote from one, 'My Mother Does Not Know':

> '*Niobe mourned her children where they fell*
> *and, by her weeping, hardened into stone.*
> *My mother does not know her own heart wel*'
>
> *Tears petrify more slowly than Medusa,*
> *but she polished the frail mirror of her art*
> *—turned poet when I went to boarding school.*
>
> *Poems are not children either, but the words*
> *wept from her thought will never freeze like tears.*
> *My mother does not know her own heart well*
> *—turned poet when I went to boarding-school.*'

All his poems have the sharp, epigrammatic quality of ancient Greek poetry, and contain considerable depths of meaning in their few, mellifluous stanzas, depths that make the simplest-seeming lyric something a little more than casual song. He was obviously a poet of great promise, and his achievement, small as it is, is memorable.

Harry Brown's poems, too, are a considerable achievement. They haven't the certainty and purity of Mr. Wallis'—indeed they are the most impure poems I've ever read—but they succeed in spite of that. Even his most audacious pastiche has point; its impurities, glaring as they are, have a certain charm.

> '*It was a sweet murmuration of pretty ladies*
> *Came to him as he rode upon the waters.*
> *It was as though their voices and lily laughter*
> *Came from queens' light-foot maids and kings'*
> *bright daughters*';

and the succeeding verses of 'The Voices of the River' almost outransom their model; so, too,'The Ambulant Blues,' where he

> '*Walked across some bridges, planned to take a dive,*
> *Couldn't see a reason for remaining alive,*
> *Water looked up, said, "Whatever you do,*
> *Don't bother me, and I won't bother you" ';

and so on, with its haunting refrain of

> '*There's no use in standing around*
> *In search of a wound.*'

But Harry Brown does these things well. He obviously enjoys himself. At other times he, too, hankers after the classical—but he hankers after anything he can make use of. His war poems, perhaps showing less of outside influence, are his least successful. His love poems, full of echoes, are some of them very beautiful. When and if he learns what he wants to do, he should go far. As it is he is usually very readable and lively—that is much!

Mr. Wilson's book is more purely nonsense. At least, so it seems to me, though in that case either Mr. Wilson or the blurb must have erred; and it may be the blurb, for it doesn't seem very competent. It mentions a sub-title which doesn't appear in the book or elsewhere on the jacket, and 'The Omelet of A. Macleish' is a devastating satire, but it is not, as the blurb says it is, in prose. How could it be? This, the omelet, is one of the best things in the book:

> *'Eliot alarmed me at first: but my later abasement:*
> *And the clean sun of France: and the freakish but*
> *beautiful fashion:*
> *Striped bathhouses bright on the sand: Anabase and*
> *The Waste Land.'*

These and the Cantos of Pound: 'O how they came pat!' But Mr. Wilson, as befits a distinguished critic, is well-read and knows his authors well. His imitations are cunning and telling, but not always entirely funny. Indeed I can conceive of it as quite possible that some people could read Mr. Wilson's parodies without knowing that they were not meant seriously. This says a lot for his critical acumen and ingenuity, but it does lend rather a portentous solemnity to his cleverness. However, there are some lovely things in it, 'The Extrovert of Walden Pond,' for instance, is an attempt at doing a Cole Porter with the refrain 'Thoreau was a neuro, too'. What I can't find in the book is 'The mood of the day or the season or the country' which, the blurb says, 'will be caught on other occasions'. It is not there? Or is it that Mr. Wilson, so soaked in pastiche, cannot, when he writes his own words make them seem different from his usual ingenious parodies? It is true there is a poem about 'The crows of March', but that is certainly meant to be funny, but what about

> *'The grass brown, the bushes dry:*
> *The hidden brook ran green and high,*
> *Wild ducks rose flapping in a rush.*

*I walked the shrivelled woods and said:*
*"My steps disturb the winter hush—*
*I am alive, and he is dead."*'

Has that deceived me, the blurb-writer, or Mr. Wilson? Mr. Wilson's fun, it seems to me, is a little too ingenious. It is always clever and slick, and, when satirical, devastates its object. But it is very refined and traditional, and has too little of Mr. Wilson in it. Thus in his poem on editing Scott Fitzgerald's papers, the verse is smooth, but not very emotive; it reads too much like an excellently done but dry exercise. But then Mr. Wilson's *Note-books of the Night* were done in the early hours of the morning, when the mind begins to go hazy. Of what it produces, then, some seems less brilliant in the morning, some remains brilliant. Mr. Wilson seems to me to have retained some of the less brilliant, too—but the book's amusing and interesting for all that.

NICHOLAS MOORE

## THE SEED BENEATH THE SNOW

First Statement: 'Canadian Prose and Poetry,' Vol. 2, Nos. 1 to 7, August, 1943, to May, 1944.

HERBERT READ, *The Education of Freemen* (Freedom Press, 1s.).

Don Bernadino, the priest in Ignazio Silone's 'Bread and Wine', sent a message to a Communist agitator saying, 'There is a bottle of old wine in my cellar and it awaits nothing but your coming to be opened,' and in the cellar of the conscienceness of nearly two centuries and of eleven million people there is a reservoir, beyond any describing, waiting to be tapped by poet and novelist alike.

This is a review that I have waited ten years to be able to write, for here in the words of the great Italian humanist, is indeed the seed beneath the snow and the names of some of those seeds are: Audrey Aikman, John Sutherland, Raymond Souster, Louis Dudek and William McConnell. 'Nunc demittis servum tuum, Domine,' for the long dreary colonial night of the dependence of my country on the culture of other nations is drawing to a close. These eyes have seen, the first green candidates of spring, campaigning that the world may hear a nightingale talking to a cariboo. The thaw has set in, the ice is breaking on the colonial bourgeois mind, Canada, my country is beginning to show not only her prairies and her twenty-storey buildings, but also her soul.

It seemed impossible that these countries of the New Europe would never produce a culture of their own. To confine myself to Canada, it seemed impossible that a nation that has produced a State, I speak of the Republic of Assinoboia, under the presidency of Louis Riel—that any creative historian would place alongside Mazzini's Republic of Rome, I repeat, it seems impossible that such a nation could never produce a novel to equal St. Reymont's 'The Peasants', or a poem to compare with one of Blake's.

That I have, despite the colonial-complex of certain university professors and the Thomas-like attitude of most British literary circles, 'stupidly' refused to believe this all my life, is perhaps the one lasting contribution, I shall be permitted to make to the future great literature of my country.

Everything is relative, and because they are the first, there is something of real greatness in these writers. There is a poem, 'At the Fall of Jerusalem,' by Audrey Aikman, that I shall always remember. Just as Greta Garbo and Bette Davis are the only women on the screen who suggest real human greatness, so only a woman who can think beautifully is ultimately really permanently attractive. This is the only poem of Miss Aikman's in 'First Statement', which seems a pity.

Among those whose work stands out in this collection, which itself stands out, among Canadian literary publications, as the Chateau Frontenac does above the Quebec skyline, is the criticism of John Sutherland, the fiction of William McConnell, and the verse, together with that of Audrey Aikman, of Raymond Souster, and Louis Dudek. It seems fitting that a review of the only really exciting writing to emerge from Canada, should end with those words that Thomas Wolfe first wrote while working here in Chelsea, 'Look Homeward, Angel'.

Herbert Read is an English intellectual with a European reputation, and he has used that reputation in the defence of beauty and of the poor with a more consistent determination than any man of letters in this country to-day. This gives him an unique place in the esteem of his contemporaries. He will be the first to concede me the privilege of placing the work of my young fellow countrymen before his in this review. One feels a certain diffidence in writing about Mr. Read's prose in an issue of this quarterly, which follows the one containing Fred Marnau's classic example of what a review should be, when he wrote of the verse of Herbert Read.

I am, however, both disappointed and depressed by this pamphlet. Can people really attain to a state of true freedom through educa-

tion. By freedom, Mr. Read and all anarchists mean the freedom of each person to achieve the most good and the greatest beauty of which the human species is capable. Mr. Read's intellectual courage can be best illustrated by his emphasis on the fact that our judgments and our loyalties are founded on æsthetic rather than moral considerations.

It is the permanent story of heredity versus environment of Marx verses God. Unless in cases of very weak temperaments, I personally don't believe that environment is terribly important; what one is born with is what really counts. William Blake received much the same education as the policeman on the beat outside the engraver's shop in Great Queen Street, where he worked. Tom Paine, that of many an excise man in the service of George III. Mr. Read put the case for freedom better in his magnificent poem to a Spanish anarchist than in this essay, which is like a white handkerchief hanging on a clothes-line that stretches out from Plato down to Freud. If you are born free, you won't lose your birthright in the classrooms of Stonyhurst, where the walls re-echo to a Jesuit's 'Ave Maria'; and, again, if you are not, the adolescent sex talk you hear through the corridors of Dartington, won't innoculate it into you.

I believe that there is a quota of free men, one is born to so many hundred thousands of the yes-man variety, and these free men may be of any class and any race—one may be a farm labourer, John Clare; one may be a cardinal, John Henry Newman. You can never get rid of them, but they will never win. Yet they will recognize each other wherever they may be found. They are the yeast to keep the bread from going flat. Two of them, in this generation and in this trade, are Herbert Read and Dylan Thomas. These men generate their own freedom, the others only abuse that bit that is given to them. If this theory is true, there is no question of a Brahmin caste of free people, *because* the very essence of being free while others are not is to be a perpetual victim.

This pamphlet was published by the Freedom Press, four members of whose editorial staff are now standing in the dock at the Old Bailey because of their activities in educating men for freedom, while most of the so-called highbrows are using whatever freedom has been handed down to them to feather their own nests, to line their libraries with books.

PAUL POTTS

First, Cabral do Nascimento, whose book *Cancioneiro* shows him to be a rather colourless writer, without extremes of optimism or pessimism, and one who expresses himself without original imagery. His verse is fluent and very simple in construction—in fact sometimes so simple as to become trivial; and his rhythm is occasionally doubtful. For these reasons the work of Cabral do Nascimento cannot be classed as anything out of the ordinary. Apart from this, there is his nihilistic attitude. He despairs of happiness, but is too resigned to misery even to feel the desire to fight: 'Guardo o mundo na mão: nao sei se sou feliz'. It is distressing to see his preoccupation with his own small disappointments, which ignores completely the universal sorrow of our time. This is why he seems unable to get beyond the trivial things he speaks of in his poem 'Realidade'. The sonnet 'Quimera' is poor both in technique and expression, yet the poem 'Misterio' (in my opinion the best in the book) shows that he can bring it off sometimes. His worst fault may be summed up in his own words: 'Tudo o que sinto ponho em verso'.

All the poems in the second book, *Mendigo de Deus*, by Father Moreira das Neves, have a strong religious feeling, even those which are not religious in theme. The religious ones are sprinkled liberally with clichés, which make for monotony. When he leaves sacred matters, his poems gain in power, in feeling and in scope; they are more poetical, and sometimes reach the level of pure poetry, both in idea and form. At its best, his work is simple, fluent and unpretentious, with here and there a particularly vivid image. The poem 'A Cantarinha de Oiro e a Bilha de Barro' reveals great descriptive power, which is not to be found in the work of Cabral do Nascimento. The book suffers, however, from being uneven in quality, a fault which, too, is aggravated, is hardly remedied by the poor quality of his sonnets, and of one or two other poems which might with advantage have been left out.

The third volume, *Sete Luas*, reveals its author, António de Sousa, as the best poet of the three. He sees the world as a whole, in contrast to Cabral do Nascimento; he is profound, in contrast to Father das Neves; and his images are original and complex, in contrast to both. There is much worth in his poetry. It has a natural, one might almost say racial strength, which shows itself sometimes in the use of historical themes, and sometimes in his vigorous choice of language. Sudden moments of intuition shine out from his verse

like flames; and he knows how to use irony and sarcasm. His images are at times very strange and make his poems difficult to understand; in this respect some of them resemble surrealist paintings. The poem 'Esconjuro' is an excellent piece of work. Speaking in general, one gains the impression from this book that António de Sousa has a tendency to undervalue his talent, and that if he would take himself more seriously he might go far.

JULIO ROSEN


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